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Ossian en France. Par P. VAN TIEGHEM. (Bibliothèque de littérature comparée.) Paris: F. Rieder & Cie., 1917. Tome Premier, pp. 441. Tome Second, pp. 544.

Dr. Van Tieghem's dissertation, *Ossian en France*, is an excellent example of the type of comparative literary study which has recently met with such favor at the hands of scholars in France. The author, whose *Mouvement romantique* appeared in 1912, is a ripe scholar, and his present work, prepared under the direction of Fernand Baldensperger and with the counsel of Gustave Lanson, admirably fulfils its avowed purpose of describing "l'histoire du succès et de l'influence d'Ossian en France, depuis les premières traductions des *Fragments* publiés par Macpherson jusqu'à nos jours." *Ossian en France* is the most complete study yet made of the Ossianic vogue in any European country. For the influence of *Ossian* upon English literature, there is nothing at all comparable to it.

By examining a host of reviews and minor publications, as well as the works of professional critics, scholars, and poets, the author has traveled the only sure and safe road to a just estimate of the attitude of the French spirit toward the supposed ancient Celtic epic and its imitators. In his effort to measure public interest in *Ossian* and Ossianic characters he has even extended his researches to 640 catalogues of private libraries, to various inventories, and to baptismal registers. As regards the history of *Ossian* after its introduction to French readers, the scope and thoroughness of the investigation is evidenced by adequate documentation. Works referred to by short titles are enumerated in a classified bibliography of forty pages at the end of the second volume. Among the important editions of *Ossian* might well be mentioned L. Jiriczek's *James Macpherson's Fragments of Ancient Poetry (1760): In diplomatischen Neudruck mit den Lesarten der Umarbeitungen* (Anglistische Forschungen 47), Carl Winter, Heidelberg, 1915. The typography of *Ossian en France* is excellent, and misprints are rare. The index unfortunately includes only names of persons and anonymous works.

Dr. Van Tieghem's method of presentation is at first chronological, but in studying the period of maximum enthusiasm he follows the more illuminating classification by categories, and he finally traces in parallel lines the facts which mark the decadence of interest. Turgot, Suard, Diderot, the mysterious critic of the *Journal des Savants* for 1764, Romantic notions regarding bards, the confusion between Scandinavians and Celts, Northern Antiquities, Anglomania, Original Genius, the Oriental Style, Nature Poetry, Blair, Cesarotti, Wertherism, Le Tourneur, La Harpe, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Evan Evans, Gray, Baour-Lormian, the *Ossian* of Hill-Smith, Napoleon, *Ossian* in the *Variétés Littéraires*, Ossianic romances, operas, and pictures, Charles Nodier, Obermann, *Ossian* and Stendal, Chateaubriand, Mme de

Staël, parodies on Ossian, Lamartine, the "Christian Ossian," *Ossian* and Scott, *Ossian* and the Encyclopedists, French pilgrimages to the Highlands, Leconte de Lisle, La Villemarqué, Celtomaniacs, Renan, contemporary Celtic scholarship—these and many other persons and matters are discussed either because they throw light directly on the subject under discussion or because they acted as intermediaries between Ossianism and other literary fashions.

Although the streams that fed the great current of Romanticism are too multitudinous to be traced to any one fountainhead, the learned origin of much eighteenth-century criticism cannot be denied. The so-called Return to Nature has been recently shown to owe much to discussions of a purely philosophical character (cf. C. A. Moore [University of North Carolina], *Studies in Philol.*, XIV [1917], 243 ff.), and no account of the Romantic interest in ballads and epics should neglect the early scholarly theories regarding primitive society and the origin of language and of poetry. The new Romantic structure rose upon a foundation quarried from the ancient classics, and *Ossian* looks back to Homer for its justification. Theories such as those set forth in Thomas Blackwell's *Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer* (1735) (cf. *Oss. en Fr.*, I, 245), in Robert Wood's *Essay on the Original Genius of Homer* (1769), as well as in Robert Lowth's *De sacra poesi Hebraeorum praelectiones* (1753) (cf. *Oss. en Fr.*, I, 203), did much toward establishing in Europe a critical faith in what Gibbon calls "the pleasing supposition that Fingal lived and that Ossian sang." *Ossian* was admirable because it illustrated even better than Homer the current theories regarding the infancy of the human race and the rhapsodies of the primitive bard unspoiled by civilization. Dr. Van Tieghem touches upon critical estimates reflecting theories such as those indicated above, but it is to be wished that in a dissertation of such wide scope as his the learned beginnings of Ossianic criticism had been treated more fully and consecutively. Suggestive observations on the influence of Homeric scholarship on literary criticism during the eighteenth century are to be found in Richard Volkmann's *Geschichte und Kritik der Wolfschen Prolegomena zu Homer* (Leipzig, 1874), pp. 1 ff., and in Georg Finster's *Homer in der Neuzeit von Dante bis Goethe* (Leipzig, 1912), s.v. "Ossian."

Prefixed to the first book of *Ossian en France* is an Introduction of ninety-two pages designed to give "une fois pour toutes et d'avance, tous les renseignements sur les poèmes ossianiques nécessaires pour comprendre de quelle oeuvre on raconte ici la fortune en France." This Introduction is of prime importance, because it is, as the author declares, "destinée à rendre le reste intelligible," and, since Dr. Van Tieghem has been forced to survey "de seconde main" a field full of pitfalls even for the initiated, it is permissible to offer a few suggestions regarding the sources and content of this survey of Ossianic literature.

Page 8. Dr. Van Tieghem asserts that "l'Irlande et les montagnes de l'Ecosse ont été habitées de temps immémorial par des populations qui parlaient et qui ont parlé jusqu'à nos jours un idiome celtique appelé le *gaélique*." As to the language of the most ancient inhabitants of the north of Scotland, we know too little to justify dogmatism (cf. T. Rice Holmes, *Ancient Britain and the Invasions of Julius Caesar* [Oxford, 1907], pp. 409 ff.). An oft-demanded explanation of the localization in Scotland of an epic cycle admitted to have originated in Ireland would be furnished by the statement that, although intercourse between the two countries may go back to the second century after Christ, the chief influx of Irish-speaking population into the district now included by Argyleshire and the neighboring territory took place about A.D. 500, and that constant communication between Ulster and the north of Scotland lasted for centuries afterward (cf. Macbain, "Excursus" to W. F. Skene's *The Highlanders of Scotland* [Stirling, 1902], pp. 385 ff.). The language of the earliest Scottish manuscript of Ossianic poems, dating from the beginning of the sixteenth century, is scarcely distinguishable from late Middle Irish (Stern, *Ztsch. für celt. Phil.*, I [1896-97], 296). These facts explain how the Gaels of Scotland came to inherit the traditions of the sister-island.

The authority for the definition of the OI *scél* (pl. *scéla*, *u*) should be page 320 or page 349 of Volume I of D'Arbois' *Cours* instead of page 46, where no mention is made of the word. According to Dr. Van Tieghem the *scéla* were "chants," "poèmes," sung to the accompaniment of the harp. Though Irish literature, especially during the later period, furnishes numerous examples of *scéla* in verse, by far the larger proportion of those preserved from the earlier period are narratives in prose or in prose interspersed with lyrical or lyrico-narrative passages. The verse portions *may* have been sung or chanted to the accompaniment of some musical instrument. The oldest Irish form of the word usually translated "harp" is *crott* (s.v., Meyer, *Contributions to Irish Lexicography*), the dative form of which occurs in the eighth-century Würzburg glosses (D'Arbois, *Cours*, I, 56); Dr. Van Tieghem gives *crotta*. The form *cruith*, given by the author as Irish, is a late formation.

Dr. Van Tieghem's broad generalizations regarding the ancient Irish *bárd* and *file* require modification, especially in view of the common misapprehension regarding the position of the former. In early Goidelic literature it is the *file*, not the *bárd*, who figures prominently as a poet and man of letters. Bards are mentioned several times by early classical authorities on the Gauls, and the word *bairtni* ("bardic compositions") is found in Irish before the end of the ninth century. In early Ireland the bard seems clearly to have been "eine niedriger stehende Art von Dichtern" more or less despised by the learned *file* (Windisch, *Ir. T.*, Extraband, p. xlv). According to the *Senchus Mór*, or Ancient Laws of Ireland, the *báird* neither learn nor teach, therefore the bard's honor price is only half that of the *file*. Another

passage in the same document, quoted from another manuscript in O'Donovan's Supplement to O'Reilly's *Irish Dictionary*, defines *bárd* as "a man without any law of learning except his own intellect," a designation which, originally intended as derogatory, might well have been mistaken by later writers as evidence that the early Celtic *bárd* was a "nature-poet," such as Homer was imagined to have been (cf. D'Arbois, *Cours*, I, 48, 73). In historic times the Irish *báird* flourished most abundantly from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century. These vagrant minstrels were everywhere welcome among the Irish population, and by singing the glories of the past so fed the national antipathy to English rule that it became necessary to pass numerous laws for their suppression (E. Hull, *Text Book of Irish Literature*, I [Dublin, 1906], 198 f.). A similar situation appears to have existed in Wales, as every student of the sources of Gray's *Bard* knows. In Ireland, in Wales, and in the Highlands the bard became a romantic figure, at least in part, because he represented a lost cause. The Romantic conception of the Celtic bard was doubtless fostered also by the uncritical use of suspicious Welsh evidence furnished by Edward Williams (Iolo Morganwg) and those of his ilk (cf. Dottin, *La Relig. des Celtes* [Paris, 1908], p. 10).

Page 10. The so-called Mythological Cycle of early Irish literature, which Dr. Van Tieghem, following the traditional view, calls "le plus ancien," is really a scholarly patchwork composed of a modicum of early myth imbedded in a mass of learned pseudo-history invented by professional antiquarians after the formation of the kernel of the Ulster and Ossianic cycles.

To the list of authorities who have opposed Zimmer's theory that the Ossianic cycle did not take shape until after the Scandinavian invasion (795) should be added the observation that the German scholar's views are now entirely discredited. The matter has been at last settled by John MacNeil (*Duanaire Finn*, [I.T.S.] [1904] [London, 1908], pp. xxiv ff.) and by Kuno Meyer in the introduction to his *Fianaigeacht* (*R.I.A., Todd Lect. Ser.*, XVI [1910]), to neither of which Dr. Van Tieghem refers. The author also fails to note that there is reason to believe that *MacCumail*, the usual form of Finn's patronymic, was originally *MacUmail* (Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. xxi). For a proper understanding of the origins from which the Romantic conception of Finn's warrior band arose it is important to add that the term *fiann* at first signified "a driving, pursuing, hunting," that it was later used as a common noun meaning "a band of warriors on the warpath," and that only at long length did it become a proper noun applied specifically to Finn's company of hunters and fighters (cf. Meyer, *op. cit.*, pp. v ff.). The name "Fenians" seems to be a late eighteenth-century formation without historical justification. There is abundant evidence that Finn's was only one of many *fianna* existing in ancient Ireland, and MacNeil, in order to account for the puzzling lack of early manuscript evidence for the existence of the Ossianic

cycle, has constructed an ingenious and illuminating, though apparently not yet fully accepted, theory that the epic grew out of a feud between the *fianna* of the older subject races of Leinster and Connacht, and that hence it was late in finding favor with the dominant aristocracy who compiled and recorded the national tradition. The earliest preserved story about Finn dates from the eighth or perhaps the seventh century, but most of the manuscript accounts are of a much later time. Nothing that Dr. Van Tieghem could have included in his Introduction would have been more instructive than this view, which for the first time places the Ossianic *scéla* on the same footing as other popular epics and explains how accounts of merely local events developed into a national cycle.

Page 11. The list of references to Ossianic material in England prior to the time of Macpherson might be considerably extended. See *Report of the Committee of the Highland Society of Scotland* (1805), pp. 18 f., 21, note; Croker, *Popular Songs of Ireland* (London, 1839), p. 54; Saunders, *Life and Letters of James Macpherson* (London, 1894), pp. 102 ff.; Stern, *Ztsch. für vergl. Littgesch.*, N.S., VIII (1895), pp. 143 f. Information regarding Finn was also accessible in Lynch's *Cambrensis Eversus*, published at St. Malo in 1662 (see ed. of 1848, I, 485); in O'Flaherty's *Ogygia* (London, 1677) (see the Eng. trans. of 1793, I, 217; II, 246); and in Keating's *Foras feasa ar Éirinn* (c. 1634), of which there appeared in 1723 a partial English translation by Dermot O'Connor, said to have been reprinted several times during the eighteenth century. A second edition, in 1726, is referred to by Best (*Bibliog.*, p. 255). It is O'Flaherty and Keating whose work Macpherson attacks with such "incroyable impudence" (*Oss. en Fr.*, I, 88). For an account of other early books dealing with the Gaels see Victor Tournier, *Esquisse d'une histoire des études celtiques* (Liège, 1905), pp. 72 ff.

Page 12. Alfred Nutt, upon whose work Dr. Van Tieghem leans rather heavily both here and elsewhere, cannot be regarded as the best authority in matters touching the date of early Irish documents. The investigations of Meyer (*op. cit.*, pp. xvi ff.) prove that as early as the seventh century after Christ heroic tradition had begun to accumulate around the name of Finn, and that by means of linguistic criteria a continuous stream of Ossianic tradition can be traced in Ireland from the seventh to the fourteenth century. Much Ossianic material is contained in manuscripts dating from the nineteenth century, though most of the stories there found are included also in earlier collections. For *Lebor na hvidre* read *Lebor na hUídre*.

Page 13. The account of the Father-and-Son Combat which is found in the ancient Irish *Aided Ainíir Aífe*, and which in some form furnished the suggestion for Macpherson's *Carthon* (l'un des plus célèbres des petits poèmes: *Oss. en Fr.*, I, 33), occurs not only in the fourteenth-century *Yellow Book of Lecan* (mentioned by Dr. Van Tieghem) but also in the sixteenth-century MS, *H.3.17* (T.C.D.). Editions and translations not referred to by Dr. Van

Tieghem are accessible in *Ériu*, I, 113 ff., 123 ff. The Irish story belongs to the Ulster cycle, but a ninth-century burlesque version in which Finn and Oisín are the chief figures was published by Meyer (*op. cit.*, pp. 24 ff.). Although the Ossianic poem cannot have been the source of Macpherson's *Carthon*, it is important as proving that Macpherson was not the first to connect with Ossian material usually associated with the Ulster cycle.

The longest Ossianic document yet discovered, the *Acallamh na Senórach* ("Colloquy of the Old Men"), which Dr. Van Tieghem knows only through the Lismore version (*Oss. en Fr.*, I, 68), is found in at least four respectable manuscripts, from which it has been excellently edited by Whitley Stokes (*Ir. T.*, IV, Heft 1 [1900]). The compilation dates probably from the end of the thirteenth or the first half of the fourteenth century (Stern, *Ztsch. für celt. Phil.*, III, 614; cf. *Mod. Phil.*, XII [1915], 596, n. 3). A newly unearthed version discovered in the Royal Irish Academy is to be edited for the Irish Texts Society. If an adequate notion of the extent of early Irish and Scottish epic literature is to be reached, D'Arbois' *Catalogue*, upon which Dr. Van Tieghem depends so largely throughout his Introduction, must be supplemented by more recent accounts of manuscript finds. Although still useful, the book, it should be recalled, was compiled in 1882 and largely from second-hand sources. For additional information on Irish and Scottish Gaelic manuscripts see especially Donald Mackinnon, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Gaelic Manuscripts in Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1912; S. H. O'Grady, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts* (in the British Museum), London (Unfinished); and the addenda and corrigenda to D'Arbois' *Catalogue*, enumerated by Best, whose *Bibliography of Irish Philology and Printed Irish Literature* (National Library of Ireland, Dublin, 1913), pp. 56 ff., should be consulted for other catalogues.

Page 14, notes 1 and 2. One of the most important collections of Ossianic poems, the early seventeenth-century *Duanaire Finn*, which is apparently known to Dr. Van Tieghem only through Stern's brief reference (*Ztsch. für vergl. Littgesch.*, N.S., VIII, 81), has been partly edited and translated by MacNeil in the volume referred to.

Page 15. Whatever sins literary and moral Macpherson may have to answer for, the common opinion (reflected by Dr. Van Tieghem) that the author of *Ossian* is solely responsible for confusing the Ulster with the Ossianic cycle needs modification. Characters and situations from the two cycles are occasionally found together in the same modern Irish folk-tale, and Miss Hull apparently has reason for believing that a similar condition existed in the Highlands and Western Isles during the eighteenth century (*A Text Book of Irish Literature*, I, 24). Cf. Stern, *Ztsch. für vergl. Littgesch.*, N.S., VIII, 80, 151. Later (p. 92) Dr. Van Tieghem puts the matter more accurately, but his statement based on p. 67 of Stern's work finds no justification in that place.

Misled by the hasty generalizations of others, Dr. Van Tieghem, following Campbell (of Tíree), characterizes the Finn of popular literature as “un nobleman et un gentleman dans la vieille et pure acception de ces mots.” The fact is that the Finn of early tradition is far more genuinely epic than such a modern conception would imply. He is valorous, generous, and courteous, but he is also subtle, vindictive, “never wholly placable, and sometimes well-nigh treacherous” (MacNeil, *op. cit.*, p. xlix). The Finn whom Dr. Van Tieghem compares to Arthur and Charlemagne is scarcely more like the Finn of the best Irish tradition than is Macpherson’s.

Page 19. For *Oisín in Tir na n’Óg* read *Oisín i n-Tír na n-Óg*, or better still *Laoidh Oisín air Thír na n-Óg*.

Page 20. In discussing the work of Jerome Stone, Dr. Van Tieghem has fallen into a number of errors which seem to have resulted from the misinterpretation of second-hand sources. According to Dr. Van Tieghem the brilliant young schoolmaster of Dunkeld “faisait l’éloge de la poésie gaélique dans le *Scots Magazine* du 15 novembre 1755.” “Dans le même recueil,” continues the author, “il publiait, en janvier 1756, la traduction d’un poème non ossianique, la *Mort de Fraoch*, et, en mai de la même année, celle d’un poème ossianique qu’il intitulait *Albin et Mey*.” The truth is that Macpherson’s eulogy was dated, not published, November 15, 1755. Embodied in a letter to the editor of the *Scots Magazine* and accompanied by an English version of a Gaelic ballad on the death of Fraoch, it was printed in 1756 on page 15 of the January number of the eighteenth volume of that journal. The English poem, which immediately follows the letter, is entitled *Albin and the Daughter of Mey: An old tale, translated from the Irish*. No poem headed *Albin and Mey* or the *Death of Fraoch* appeared in the *Scots Magazine* for May, 1756. The *Death of Fraoch* and the poem which Dr. Van Tieghem calls *Albin and Mey* are really one, the former being the correct designation of the original. Mey is the notorious Queen Medb, who figures prominently in the ancient Irish epic of the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*. In substituting an imaginary Albin for the original hero Fraoch, Stone appears to have anticipated Macpherson’s practice of exchanging for more euphonious names the cacophonous Celtic appellations. The English is merely a free rendering into conventional eighteenth-century poetic phraseology of the well-known *Bás Fraoich*, a Gaelic ballad which had been traditional in Scotland for at least three centuries (cf. *The Dean of Lismore’s Book* [Edinburgh, 1862], Gaelic Text, pp. 36, 37), and which recounts an episode in the *Táin Bó Fraoich*. The latter belongs to the Ulster, not the Ossianic, cycle, and on linguistic grounds may be regarded as “perhaps the most archaic of the longer sagas” of that group ([London] *Phil. Soc. Trans.* [1895–98], p. 79 and n. 2). Dr. Van Tieghem fails to note that the *Bás Fraoich* is only one of ten Gaelic ballads collected by the ill-fated scholar. The original of the translation in the *Scots Magazine* was extracted from Stone’s papers and printed in the Appendix

to the famous *Report of the Committee of the Highland Society of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1805), pp. 99 ff., and the whole collection was published by the late Professor Donald Mackinnon in the *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, XIV (1889), 314 ff. Another collection illustrating the interest in Gaelic poetry before the appearance of Macpherson's *Ossian* was made by John Farquharson about 1745, but the manuscript appears to have been used to kindle fires (see the mass of evidence collected by Sir John Sinclair in *The Poems of Ossian in the Original Gaelic* [Highland Society of London] [London, 1807], I, xl ff.).

Page 22. For *Belgowan* read *Balgowan*.

Page 67. The list of references to recent publications of Ossianic literature might have been greatly enlarged and improved had the author referred to Dottin's bibliographical outline of Celtic literature in the *Revue de synthèse historique*, III (1901) and VIII (1904) (the former of which is cited elsewhere [*Oss. en Fr.*, I, 11, n. 6] in another connection), and to R. I. Best's monumental *Bibliography*, already mentioned.

Pages 85-87. The validity of Dr. Van Tieghem's conclusion that the English text of Macpherson's *Ossian* is posterior to the composition of the Gaelic text of 1807 is open to the gravest suspicion. Cogent indeed must be the reasons advanced by him who would reverse the decision of Macbain (*Celtic Magazine*, XII [1887], 252) and Stern (*Ztsch. für vergl. Littgesch.*, N.S., VIII, 62), two of the most trustworthy authorities on Celtic matters, the former perhaps the most learned of recent students of Scottish Gaelic. The question of the relative priority of the two documents cannot, it is true, be answered immediately from the unassailable conclusions of Macbain and Stern that the Gaelic of 1807 is generally un-Celtic in vocabulary, in grammar, in idiom, in phraseology, and in meter. Their results taken as a whole prove no more than that the text (some parts of which are better Gaelic than others) was composed by some person or persons who, while generally thinking in English, were attempting to write Gaelic. Certain details of the evidence, however, point strongly toward the priority of the English. For example, the paucity of Gaelic turns of phrase in the English, combined with the constant appearance of English idioms and word-order in the Gaelic, creates a suspicion that the writer of the Gaelic had the English before him. Dr. Van Tieghem asserts that common opinion regards the 1807 text as "l'oeuvre des commissaires de la *Highland Society*," who, finding only scattered notes among Macpherson's posthumous papers, translated the English into Gaelic and presented the latter to the world as Macpherson's long-promised originals. As far as the present writer is aware, this is stating the case of the opposition far too simply. The evidence (too voluminous to be presented within the scope of this review) seems to point to the following as the solution most nearly in accord with the alleged conflicting evidence. Macpherson gathered from various sources summaries of stories and even scattered texts. Some

of the latter he discarded, either because of their difficulty or because they failed to square with his epic theories; others he used as suggestions for his English. Having written the English, he proceeded, alone or with the assistance of his helpers, to revise his "originals" and to piece out the Gaelic epic which he believed or affected to believe he was restoring. It appears that most of the Gaelic that now exists was "put together," to use Macpherson's phrase, during 1784 and the succeeding years by James, alone or with the help of his better-informed kinsman Lachlan, or some of his other assistants (Macbain, *Celtic Mag.*, XII, 252), but that, owing to Macpherson's political activities and loss of interest, the work was never completed. This highly probable theory of composite authorship accounts, at least in large part, for the fact that better Gaelic occurs in *Fingal* than in *Temora* (cf. *Celtic Mag.*, XII, 250). The presence in the Gaelic of passages not found in the English—a fact which seems to have impressed both Windisch and Dr. Van Tieghem—may mean no more than that the corresponding English was omitted by Macpherson in the final draft of his epics. Of the many bits of evidence tending to show the true state of the case, may be mentioned certain Gaelic passages printed as illustrations along with early editions of the English texts but appearing in entirely different form in the Gaelic of 1807 (cf. *Celtic Mag.*, XII, 252; *Ztsch. für vergl. Littgesch.*, N.S., VIII, 58 f.). The well-recognized fact that "la traduction anglaise littéraire ne ressemble pas du tout à l'anglais de Macpherson" is hardly surprising when we consider the practical impossibility, at least for Macpherson and Company, of rendering into idiomatic Gaelic ballad meter the "drunken prose" of many parts of the English text. That in no case was any Gaelic "original" written before the corresponding English it would be useless to contend, but concerning a perhaps indeterminable but certainly extremely large proportion of Macpherson's *Ossian* Macbain's decision must stand: "The Gaelic . . . is a paraphrase of the English."¹

As regards the history of *Ossian* in France, Dr. Van Tieghem's labors would have been greatly lightened and the development of the Ossian myth could have been more clearly traced had the author had at his disposal an account of the relative contributions of genuine and spurious Celtic material to the stock in trade of Romanticism. The nature of the Romantic interest in the past can be perfectly understood only as the result of an estimate of the part played by error—an estimate which has been attempted for Norse tradition by Professor Farley in his *Scandinavian Influences in the English Romantic Movement* ([Harvard] *Studies and Notes in Philol. and Lit.*, IX [1903]).

The two earliest attempts in France to settle the Ossianic question by reference to authentic Celtic sources are highly illuminating for the development

¹ Stern's words are: "Die nähere Prüfung des Textes des gälischen 'Ossian' lässt nicht den geringsten Zweifel bestehen, dass er aus dem englischen Originale übersetzt ist."—*Ztsch. für vergl. Littgesch.*, N.S., VIII, 62.

of popular opinion regarding ancient Celtic literature. The adverse decision of "M. de C.," set forth in an elaborately documented and relatively scholarly *Mémoire*, prepared in 1764 at the request of the editors of the *Journal des Sçavans*, produced so little effect that a few years later the very publication in which it had appeared could state that "l'antiquité des poèmes d'Ossian paraît actuellement hors de doute." Disregarding the conclusions of "M. de C.," the public gladly accepted the type of scholarship represented by the physician Terence Brady in his letter published in the *Journal des Sçavans* for 1763.¹ Brady's communication, written to establish the authenticity of Macpherson's *Carthon*, is crammed with errors drawn from a well of ignorance which Dr. Van Tieghem appears not to have sounded. On the basis of a chance reference in the English translation of Keating's *History*, published in 1723, the Irishman invents an etymology for the title and imagines an Irish source for the content of Macpherson's version of the Father-and-Son Combat. Among the "many romantic fables" about Finn, Keating mentions the *Bruighean Chaorthainn* (Rowan-tree Palace). Struck by a fancied resemblance between the names *Carthon* and *Bruin-Chartuinn* (an inaccurate phonetic rendering of the Irish title), Brady asserts that the Irish story is the source of Macpherson's account, implies that it belongs to a group of narratives "presqu'aussi anciens que les Héros qu'ils célèbrent," and in order to support his claim translates the title "Le Combat de Carthon."² The *Bruighean Chaorthainn* is a wild, rambling narrative, the plot of which has no similarity to *Carthon*. It was popular during the eighteenth century and, as Keating recognized, is a late romance of the decadent Middle Irish type.³ It is no wonder that, fed on such pabulum, the Ossianic myth thrive, especially in an age when the learned reviewer of a "*Dissertation . . . sur une nation des Celtes nommés Brigantes ou Brigants*,"⁴ published in 1762, spoke of Celtic as a "langue inconnue," and, content to re-echo the opinion of his author, wrote: "On soupçonne que les anciens Livres Irlandois sont écrits en Celtique"(!)

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¹ The letter is printed on pp. 84 ff. of the July issue. Dr. Van Tieghem incorrectly refers to p. 426 of the June number. Cf. *Oss. en Fr.*, I, 163.

² Brady also informs his readers that the proper form of Finn's name is Finn OM Couel, which Dr. Van Tieghem further deforms into Fin O'Mac-Conel.

³ One of the earliest MSS, found in the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh, is said to date from the year 1603. Cf. Mackinnon, *Descriptive Cat. of Gaelic MSS* (Edinburgh, 1912), p. 14. Pádraic mac Piarais, *Bruidhean Chaorthainn*, Baile Átha Cliath (1908), p. iii.

⁴ *Journal des Sçavans* (June, 1763), pp. 292, 295.